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Structure and Organization of Agenda 21

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper has been prepared in response to decision 2/5 of the Preparatory Committee at its second session, which requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to "continue to develop his proposals on 'Agenda 21' for discussion at its third session, taking into account the views expressed in the discussion and the conclusions of the regional preparatory conference".

2. The purpose of this paper is to articulate a brief overview of Agenda 21 as it is now perceived by the Secretariat, and to introduce the Agenda 21 Action Programme papers which have been prepared for 10 different areas.

PURPOSES OF AGENDA 21

3. Agenda 21 is essentially a modified version of the action plans that have been endorsed by past United Nations Conferences. There are however some

significant differences which are reflected in its format and manner of presentation. These arise primarily from the extensive range and complex nature of the subject matter being addressed by UNCED as well as the requirement of the General Assembly resolution 44/228 and the Preparatory Committee that:

a. the environment and development aspects of each issue should be dealt with in an integrated basis;

b. cross-sectoral aspects of each issue must be examined separately and the results of these reflected in the comprehensive consideration of cross-sectoral issues themselves; and

c. the important linkages between each issue and other issues, which affect or are affected by it, must be identified in each case and their implications made clear.

4. Meeting these requirements dictates modifications in the format and manner of presentation of individual issues and the establishment of a framework for their presentation which makes these relationships clear. This would not be feasible in a simple listing of individual action proposals.

5. Agenda 21 is designed as a framework for the range of decisions to be taken by UNCED on a substantial number of recommended actions dealing with the various issues to be addressed by the Conference. However, if governments so decide, it could also be used as a means for monitoring and reviewing implementation of these decisions after the Conference. This would then in turn provide guidance to governments, agencies and other actors in the ongoing decisions they must take on implementation and revision of these actions during the remaining part of this decade e.g. 1993-2000.

6. It could also serve as an ongoing framework for action after the year 2000. Should this be decided, Agenda 21 would provide a continuing process and source of information to evaluate and adapt implementation of UNCED decisions and guide future decision-making. Although not legally binding in nature, approval of Agenda 21 by UNCED would represent a high degree of political commitment to it which would provide the basis for the necessary complementary and supporting action in the various other relevant organizations and fora to be involved in its implementation.

7. Agenda 21 would not in itself require establishment of any new organization. However, it will require that a decision be made as to where in the existing United Nations structure to locate the functions now being performed by the UNCED Secretariat and the information and experience that has been assembled through the UNCED process. Such a decision would undoubtedly require a significant addition to the capacities of the organization to which this responsibility is assigned. The functions in respect of Agenda 21 now being carried out by the UNCED Secretariat, and the information storage and processing facilities that support these functions, would be readily transferable to an appropriate permanent place in the United Nations.

THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF AGENDA 21

Broad Mandate

8. The broad mandate of Agenda 21, as the action plan to be adopted by the Conference, would be based primarily on the principles of sustainable development incorporated in the Earth Charter. The starting point for Agenda 21 is the mandate established by General Assembly resolution 44/228 and the subsequent decisions taken by the UNCED Preparatory Committee. Based on these, it will articulate in respect of each of the issues addressed by UNCED, pursuant to resolution 44/228 the objectives required to achieve sustainable development through integration of environment and development and set out a series of actions designed to carry out these objectives. These action proposals, which are included as "Options for Agenda 21" in the accompanying documents, provide the primary ingredients or "building blocks" of Agenda 21 and they will be presented within a framework designed to facilitate the process of decision-making and action required to effect the transition to sustainable development.

Objectives

9. In each section of Agenda 21, as proposed, objectives are articulated which follow from the analysis of the issues and establish the basis for the action proposals in respect of these issues which follow, presented as "Options for Agenda 21".

Global Goals

10. In addition to the issue-by-issue objectives that are set out in each section it may be useful to consider a number of major "global goals" towards which the actions would represent important steps forward. These goals would define the broad directions to which the actions provided for in Agenda 21 would be aimed and provide a yardstick for determining priorities and evaluating progress. Agenda 21, as adopted by the Conference, would not be expected to include all of the actions required to meet these global goals, but to effect a significant and decisive movement towards their achievement.

11. The following are examples of the kind of global goals envisaged:

i) revitalize the economies of the developing countries; on a sustainable basis, reversing the outflow of resources from them and ensuring their access to the new and additional financial resources and technologies that will be required to incorporate the environmental dimension into their own development and participate fully in international development and environmental cooperation;

ii) eradicate poverty and ensure access by the poor to sustainable livelihoods and the requirements for human development;

iii) reverse the destruction of renewable resources - soils, water, forests, biological and genetic resources;

iv) ensure availability of energy supplies, particularly to developing countries, under conditions that will safeguard the environment and contain risks of climate change;

v) ensure universal availability and protection of water supplies;

vi) ensure food security on a sustainable basis;

vii) ensure equitable access to and use of the global commons by all Nations under conditions that will provide for their protection;

viii) effect changes in the system of incentives and penalties which motivate economic behaviour to ensure that they provide strong and positive motivation for sustainability;

ix) effect a transition to patterns of production and consumption in industrialized countries which will drastically reduce their currently disproportionate contribution to deterioration of the earth's environment and to global environmental risks;

x) stabilize global population and support each country in measures which enable it to achieve a sustainable balance between its population, its environment and resource endowment and the standards of life to which its people aspire;

xi) maintain the integrity of the earth's essential life-support systems and the principal ecosystems on which the survival and well-being of people depends;

xii) ensure a habitable and sustainable living environment for all.

12. The options for Agenda 21 actions could be displayed in relation to such broad global goals together with where feasible, specific targets which define steps towards these goals.

Linkages

13. This part of the Agenda 21 document will describe the linkages, or connections, between programmes, policies or institutions as they relate to the global goals described in the previous section and the original issues raised in the United Nations Resolution 44/228. As an example of linkages which are currently under consideration in each of the sectoral documents an interaction matrix has been prepared (Table 1). The Secretariat has initiated additional work on linkages and has commissioned a major study on linkages amongst the issues by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) with the support of the Government of Canada.

14. The most familiar linkages are those of a programmable and technical kind. These occur largely with respect to inter-sectoral activities, e.g. those readily recognized for the most part, and they have already attracted some institutional attention. Less clearly perceived are the linkages that span over-arching spheres of human activity, e.g. those between environment and development, between natural resources and basic human needs, between ecology and economics, and between environment and security. Then there are still broader-scope linkages such as those between economic efficiency and social equity, between the biosphere, the technosphere and the sociosphere, and between the present and the future. The focus in Agenda 21 will be on those linkages that are most relevant for the formulation, implementation, monitoring and assessment, of the action programmes it contains.

Programme Areas

15. The next element of Agenda 21 consists of the Programme Areas. Each of these involves targets articulating the specific end points which help achieve the global goals referred to in paragraph #10. Where possible these will be expressed in quantified terms. To enhance accountability, targets could be specified as intermediate steps over time to meet the ultimate target (e.g., a short term objective over the next 5-10 years versus a longer term goal by, say, the year 2025). As such the targets can therefore account for delays due to capacity building, technology development, and so on.

16. The discussions of the Preparatory Committee during the Plenary session and in the Working Groups will provide the basis for modifying, adding to, and deleting from, the options for action outlined in the documents prepared for PrepCom III.

17. Each programme area suggests activities to meet the specified targets. These activities should involve application of the various "enabling mechanisms" (e.g., economic instruments, integrated planning, institution building, etc.) required to meet the targets. Activities are directives that should be measurable (and therefore amenable to monitoring) and accountable over time. This means that for each action programme the Secretariat could specify who is responsible for carrying out the action (e.g., communities, each nation, industry, international agency, NGO's, etc.), when it should be carried out (e.g., next year, within 10 years, by 2000, etc.) and where it should be implemented (e.g., within each nation, regionally, river basins, urban areas, coastal zone, etc.), and how much it might cost.

18. Overall approval through the UNCED process will be sought for the action programmes developed within Agenda 21 to be followed by complementary and supporting action in other fora and organizations. They would therefore be non- binding in the legal sense but would carry a high degree of political commitment. Some programmes could be developed fully by the time of the Conference in Rio, while others would require agreement on necessary procedures after the 1992 Conference for their further development. Agenda 21 would also include some action programmes of a legally binding nature flowing from conventions and other legal instruments, e.g. conventions on climate change and biodiversity, which are developed in other fora but have important linkages with other Agenda 21 issues.

PRESENTATION OF AGENDA 21

19. As indicated above, the basic ingredients for "building blocks" of Agenda 21 are the action proposals identified as "Options for Agenda 21" in each of the sectoral and cross-sectoral issue areas. The rest is format and presentation. Because of the manner in which the underlying information and data have been assembled and stored, the Agenda 21 action programmes can be presented in a number of different formats (e.g. handbooks, documents, diagrams, computer data bases, video material, etc.) to facilitate its distribution, use and review throughout the United Nations system, international governments, inter-governmental and non- governmental organizations and other users and interested parties. In the limited time that remains before the 1992 Conference, it would not be feasible to develop all of these formats fully but, should the Conference decide to use Agenda 21 as an ongoing means of guiding and coordination of the action programme agreed at the Conference, the development of these various formats would clearly multiply its usefulness. In the meantime, some example of these will be available at PrepCom III and, in light of the guidance provided by the Preparatory Committee, could then be developed further by the UNCED Secretariat for presentation at the fourth Preparatory Committee meeting.

20. The computer based information system which has been established to support development and presentation of Agenda 21, which was referred to briefly in the report of the Secretary-General of the Conference to PrepCom II (A/CONF.151/PC/14/Annex I) makes it possible to present the action proposals contained in Agenda 21 in a number of different ways which, again, would facilitate its usefulness for a number of different purposes and by the different actors involved in its implementation. In all cases the starting point is the presentation of the issues in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/228 and it should be stressed that in presenting the action proposals in these different ways, the proposals themselves remain the same. Only the manner of their presentation is varied. It is proposed that, initially, the contents of Agenda 21 be presented in the following ways:

a. By issue on the basis of the sectoral and cross-sectoral issues defined by General Assembly resolution 44/228;

b. By the global goals which they serve;

c. By sectors, e.g. agriculture, transport, energy, industry, etc;

d. By regions and perhaps sub-regions;

e. By the institutions and/or organizations principally involved in their implementation; and

f. By the primary constituencies which are involved in/or affected by the actions concerned, e.g. women, youth, educators, religious and cultural leaders, trade unions, indigenous people, etc.

The Secretariat is endeavouring to have a prototype of the data base which makes possible these presentational methods for PrepCom III so as to provide delegates with the opportunity to observe it in operation.

ACTION PROGRAMMES FOR PREPCOM III

21. Action proposals, consisting of action programmes, or in some cases policy guidelines have been developed for consideration of PrepCom III for each of the major sectoral and cross-sectoral issue areas. These are presented in separate documents, each headed "Options for Agenda 21" and have been numbered in a specific sequence for ease of review by the Preparatory Committee. The titles of these are listed in annex I.

22. It should be pointed out that it has not been feasible in the time available to rationalize each of the action proposals and make them fully consistent with each other or to elaborate fully all relevant linkages and cross- sectoral dimensions. The overlaps and inadequacies reflected in these documents will be reconciled following PrepCom III, based on the decisions and guidance it provides in respect of Agenda 21.

23. The action proposals presented in each of the "Options for Agenda 21" documents prepared for Working Group I and II follow the following basic format:

a. Basis for Action - a brief introduction to the rationale for the proposed action programme. Where possible, this is a summary of the analyses presented in the background documents for the sector;

b. Objectives - for each issue area, programme specific objectives and targets are described. By PrepCom IV these targets could, where possible, be expressed in quantitative terms over time to facilitate future evaluation and accountability. However for PrepCom III such quantification was not possible for most programmes;

c. Activities - fairly detailed descriptions of the options for action to meet the stated objectives. Where possible the activities are directed towards a specific institutional level (e.g., national government, international organization, etc.) who could either take responsibility for the activity, or coordinate it.

24. In the final Agenda 21 document additional sections will be presented for each selected programme including financial requirements, national and international institutional implications, linkages to other sectors/issues/regions, and indicators for monitoring.

25. The actions described in the Agenda 21 documents comprise a mixture of measures from specific establishment of targets to recommendations on financial instruments, technology development and transfer, and institutional development. In some cases these activities could become components of a broader set of agreements emerging out of parallel processes complementary to UNCED (e.g., Framework Convention on Climate Change). In other cases these activities could be relevant only to a particular sector and are therefore best left in the sectoral programme.

26. The options for action in the principal cross-sectoral areas of finance, technology transfer and institutions, which it is proposed have separate

places on the Conference agenda because of their special importance, will be based to a large extent on the analyses and proposals arising out of consideration of each of the sectoral issue areas. They will thus be presented separately although this should not prevent them from being treated as integral parts of Agenda 21. All those other cross-sectoral issues which are not treated separately in the Conference agenda would, of course, be integrated fully into Agenda 21.

27. The Preparatory Committee may consider the proposed structure of Agenda 21 as outlined above and provide direction and guidance to the Secretariat, on the basis of which it can be further developed and presented in a form in which the Preparatory Committee can take final decisions concerning at its fourth session.

ANNEX I

Options for Agenda 21

A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.1	Protection of the Atmosphere: Options for Agenda 21
A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.2	Protection and Management of Land Resources: Options for Agenda 21
A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.3	Conservation and Development of Forests: Options for Agenda 21
A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.4	Conservation of Biological Diversity: Options for Agenda 21
A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.5	Biotechnology: Options for Agenda 21
A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.6	Protection of Oceans, all kinds of seas including enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, coastal and the protection, rational use and development of their living resources: Options for Agenda 21
A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.7	Protection of the Quality and Supply of Freshwater Resources: Application of Integrated Approaches to the Development, Management and Use of Water Resources: Options for Agenda 21
A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.8	Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals: Options for Agenda 21
A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.9	Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes: Options for Agenda 21
A/CONF.151/PC/42/Add.10	Environmentally Sound Management of Solid Wastes and Sewage-Related Issues: Options for Agenda 21

Table 1. - Interaction matrix showing the main linkages that have been considered between each of the 44/22B based sectoral issues. The entries are not meant to be an exhaustive list of all of the possible linkages. The matrix should be read from the row to the column. In other words, how does the row 'sector' impact/link to the column sector. Therefore each 'sector' (except toxic, chemical and solid wastes) are repeated as both a row and a column to capture linkages in both directions.

	ATMOSPHERE	LAND/AGRICULTURE	FOREST	OCEANS	FRESHWATER	BIODIVERSITY	BIOTECHNOLOGY
ATMOSPHERE		-Drought -Precipitation and temperature patterns impact on crop and biota production. -pollutants on crop & biota production. -UV radiation inputs on crops and biota	-Precipitation and temperature patterns effects on forest survival. -Soil moisture. -Acid deposition effects on forest growth.	-Sea level rise. -Ocean warming. -Ultraviolet radiation effects on biota. -Acid rain effects on ocean systems.	-Long-range transport of toxic and acid rain. -Precipitation and temperature patterns -Consumptive uses for cooling energy systems	-Species loss due to climate effects. -Location of protected areas due to climate. -Change in habitat structure due to climate -Acid deposition impacts on species survival. -Ozone links to ultraviolet effects on biota.	
LAND,SOILS AND AGRICULTURE	-Methane and nitrous oxide releases from agriculture. -Energy use in agriculture -Reduced CO2 sinks due to vegetation removal	-Desertification. -Landuse planning. -Population and activity distribution	-Clearing of forest to create cropland.	-Coastal erosion and siltation due to mismanagement. -Destruction of nesting grounds -Agro-chemicals pollution of coastal zone.	-Siltation. -Agro-industry chemicals contaminating water -Competition for water use from agriculture	-Loss of habitat. -Man made cultivars contribute to widening gene pool	-Biota as source of germplasm for genetic engineering
FORESTS	-Deforestation releases of CO_2 & CO. -Forest death releases of CO_2. -Reduced CO_2 sink due to deforestation. -Releases of CH4	-Land degradation after deforestation -Agroforestry -Forests as protective factor -Land use conflicts		-Siltation due to erosion. -Destruction of mangrove fish and marine mammal habitat.	-Deforestation effects on river runoff & flow -Downstream nutrient enrichment through leaching -Sediment accumulation in reservoirs -Riparian habitat for fish	-Habitat alteration -Forest as species "store-house". -Species loss due to deforestation. -Protected areas for wildlife	-Biota as source of germplasm for genetic engineering ,
OCEANS	-Carbon sink -Degradation of plankton as carbon sink. -Regulator of global weather.	-Alternate source of food. -Climate mitigation in coastal areas. -Loss of land due to sea level rise.	-Marine pollution effects on mangroves			-Marine pollution impacts on ecosystems & species -Harvesting of endangered marine mammals and turtles. -Damage to fragile marine ecosystems -Diverse ecosystem	-Biota as source of germplasm for genetic engineering
FRESHWATER		-Water as limiting factor on food production. -Contaminated water effects food crops	-Inundation of forest areas -Pollutant effects on forest survival	-Sediment transport. -Salinity changes due to water flow alterations. -Ecosystem alteration -Chemicals and waste transported by freshwater systems.	-Altered water flows & implications to waste disposal. -Industrial effluents impacts water quality	-Water borne pollutants from land based activities impacting biodiversity.	

	ATMOSPHERE	LAND/AGRICULTURE	FOREST	OCEANS	FRESHWATER	BIODIVERSITY	BIOTECHNOLOGY
BIODIVERSITY		-Loss of cultivars species. -Loss of Soil organisms -Affects fertility	-Loss of species for forestry and habitat. -Loss of forests & supported wildlife. -Maintenance of ecosystem function	-Maintenance of ecosystem function	-Maintenance of ecosystem function		-New medicines. -New chemicals. -Genetic resources. -Improved food crops
BIOTECHNOLOGY		-Increased food production through specialized crop species. -New crop varieties for increased production & rehabilitation -Release of modified organisms	-Increased production by improved varieties of seedlings. -Maintenance of gene pool.	-Uncontrolled manipulation of species. -Artificial selection of species. -Increased fish production by improved varieties of stocks	-Increased fish prod'n by improved varieties of stocks	-Protection of genetic resources -Creation of new species and varieties	
TOXIC CHEMICALS	-Fumes from factories -Industrial Accidents -Inappropriate incineration causing toxic releases to atmosphere. -SOx emissions	-Land contamination into food chain.		-Disposal in oceans. -Biological uptake and contamination. -Accidents & spills. -Pollution effects on coastal zone	-Surface & groundwater contamination from inadequate disposal -Accidents & spills -Pollution from industrial activities	-Pollution effects on biodiversity	
HAZARDOUS WASTES	-CFC releases and ozone depletion.	-Land contamination into food chain. -Persistent effects on health		-Oceans disposal -Accidental spills destroying fragile marine ecosystems. -Pollution effects on coastal zone	-Water contamination from poor disposal	-Pollution effects on biodiversity	
SOLID WASTES	-CH4 & CO2 releases from land-fills. -Particulate releases	-Land contamination. -Elimination of land for alternate uses -Recycling of organic wastes as fertilizer	-Conservation through waste recycling	-Improper land fills. -Plastics from improper disposal. -Pollution effects on wetlands & coastal zone	-Surface/groundwater pollution. -Eutrophication from land fills & sewage	-Pollution effects on biodiversity	-Biotechnology for waste conversion -Industrial waste treatment